

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A vehicle disabling system comprising:

a vehicle control unit for positioning in a vehicle, the vehicle control unit including a transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals via free space, the transceiver being adapted to receive an inquiry signal and transmit an identification code upon the receipt of the inquiry signal;

a central database station including memory for storing a plurality of identification codes of vehicle control units, an authorization code being associated in the memory with each of the identification codes of the vehicle control units; and

a mobile law enforcement unit for positioning in a law enforcement vehicle, the law enforcement unit including a transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals via free space, the law enforcement unit being adapted to transmit the inquiry signal to a vehicle control unit, the law enforcement unit being adapted to receive an identification code from the vehicle control unit and transmit the identification code to central database station, the law enforcement unit being adapted to transmit the stop signal with the authorization code via free space to the vehicle control unit upon the receipt of the authorization code from the central database station.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the vehicle control unit is adapted for connection to at least one exterior light circuit of the vehicle such that exterior lights of the vehicle are flashable by the vehicle control unit upon receipt of the inquiry signal by the

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transceiver to provide external visual confirmation of receipt of the inquiry signal by the vehicle control unit.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the vehicle control unit is adapted for connection to an ignition system of the vehicle such that the vehicle control unit is adapted to lower an engine speed of the vehicle to an idle condition upon the receipt by the transceiver of a stop signal accompanied by an authorization code via free space within a predetermined amount of time after receipt of the inquiry signal.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the vehicle control unit is adapted for connection to a horn of the vehicle such that the vehicle control unit is adapted to actuate the horn of the vehicle upon the receipt by the transceiver of a stop signal accompanied by an authorization code via free space within a predetermined amount of time after receipt of the inquiry signal.

5. The system of claim 3 wherein the predetermined amount of time is approximately 30 seconds.

6. The system of claim 4 wherein the predetermined amount of time is approximately 30 seconds.

7. A vehicle disabling system comprising:
a vehicle control unit for positioning in a vehicle, the vehicle control unit including a transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals via free space, the transceiver being adapted to receive an inquiry signal and transmit an identification code upon the receipt of the inquiry signal, the vehicle control unit being connectable to at least one exterior light circuit of the vehicle such that exterior lights of the vehicle are flashable by the vehicle control unit upon

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receipt of the inquiry signal by the transceiver to provide external visual confirmation of receipt of the inquiry signal by the vehicle control unit, the vehicle control unit being connectable to an ignition system of the vehicle such that the vehicle control unit is adapted to lower an engine speed of the vehicle to an idle condition upon the receipt by the transceiver of a stop signal accompanied by an authorization code via free space within a predetermined amount of time after receipt of the inquiry signal, the vehicle control unit being connectable to a horn of the vehicle such that the vehicle control unit is adapted to actuate the horn of the vehicle upon the receipt by the transceiver of a stop signal accompanied by an authorization code via free space within a predetermined amount of time after receipt of the inquiry signal, wherein the predetermined amount of time is approximately 30 seconds;

a central database station including memory for storing a plurality of identification codes of vehicle control units, an authorization code being associated in the memory with each of the identification codes of the vehicle control units; and

a mobile law enforcement unit for positioning in a law enforcement vehicle, the law enforcement unit including a transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals via free space, the law enforcement unit being adapted to transmit the inquiry signal to a vehicle control unit, the law enforcement unit being adapted to receive an identification code from the vehicle control unit and transmit the identification code to central database station, the law enforcement unit being adapted to transmit the stop signal with the authorization code via free space to the vehicle control unit upon the receipt of the authorization code from the central database station.

8. A method of disabling a vehicle comprising the steps of:

providing a vehicle control unit for positioning in the vehicle, the vehicle control unit including a transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals via free space;

providing a central database station including memory for storing a plurality of identification codes of vehicle control units, the memory of the central database storing an authorization code associated with each of the identification codes of the vehicle control units;

providing a mobile law enforcement unit for positioning in a law enforcement vehicle, the law enforcement unit including a transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals via free space;

transmitting an inquiry signal from the law enforcement unit to the vehicle control unit;

transmitting an identification code from the vehicle control unit to the law enforcement unit;

transmitting the identification code from the law enforcement unit to the central database station; and

matching an authorization code from the memory of the central database station to the identification code.

9. The method of claim 8 additionally comprising transmitting the authorization code to the law enforcement unit.

10. The method of claim 9 additionally comprising transmitting the authorization code and stop signal from the law enforcement unit to the vehicle control unit.

11. The method of claim 10 additionally comprising lowering an engine speed of an engine of the vehicle by the vehicle control unit upon the receipt by the vehicle control unit of the stop signal accompanied by the authorization code.

12. The method of claim 10 additionally comprising actuating a horn of the vehicle upon the receipt by the vehicle control unit of the stop signal accompanied by the authorization code.

13. The method of claim 8 additionally comprising flashing exterior lights of the vehicle by the vehicle control unit upon receipt of the inquiry signal by the vehicle control unit to provide external visual confirmation of receipt of the inquiry signal by the vehicle control unit.

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